

LOVE

Confessions

OCTOBER

10¢

QUALITY
SERIES
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**"I STOLE MY WAY INTO
A CAREER! BUT I COULDN'T
STEAL ROMANCE!"**





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Enjoy Hilarious "Monkey-Shines" at your next Masquerade Party WITH THESE AMAZING LIFE-LIKE RUBBER MASKS



NOW WATCH ME HAVE
SOME FUN WITH THE
GANG TONIGHT AT
THE MASQUERADE

**COVER ENTIRE HEAD . . . LAST FOR
YEARS . . . SO LIFELIKE PEOPLE GASP
WITH AMAZEMENT AND DELIGHT...**

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**DONALD
DUCK**
\$3.95
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MASKS AVAILABLE

IDIOT MONKEY LADY KILLER
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All masks above are \$2.95 each
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- () Ship C.O.D. I will pay postman the price plus C.O.D. postage
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Dangerous DECEPTION

I WAS A THIEF! I STOLE MY FIRST FREEDOM... STOLE MY WAY INTO A CAREER... STOLE THE TRIUMPH THAT BROUGHT ME FAME! BUT WHEN I TRIED TO STEAL ROMANCE, I LEARNED A BITTER TRUTH...YOU CAN'T HIDE YOUR LOOT IN A LOVE-TIGHT VAULT...AND NO ONE IS MORE VULNERABLE THAN THE THIEF OF HEARTS!



DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BORN ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS? TO HAVE PEOPLE REFER TO YOU AS THAT **POOR** LITTLE LINDA CRANE?



TO BE ALWAYS A LITTLE OUT-OF-DATE... A LITTLE SHABBY...LEFT OUT OF THE FUN?

I GOT MY ALLOWANCE TODAY, GANG! LET'S BLOW THE CHICKS TO A COKE!

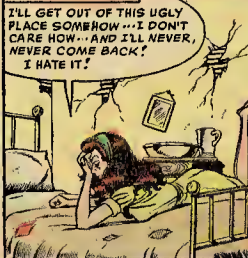


"...TO BE ALWAYS HUNGRY FOR THE BEAUTY YOU CAN NEVER AFFORD?"



I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO HAVE A LOVELY ROOM LIKE THAT!

HAVE YOU EVER HATED YOUR HOME AND YOUR LIFE WITH A BITTERNESS THAT EATS AT YOUR HEART AND WARPS YOUR VERY SOUL?



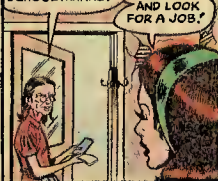
I'LL GET OUT OF THIS UGLY PLACE SOMEHOW... I DON'T CARE HOW... AND I'LL NEVER, NEVER COME BACK!

I HATE IT!

And THEN I GOT MY FIRST BREAK! I WAS ABOUT TO GRADUATE...

LOOK, LINDA! YOUR BUT MA... UNCLE BOB SENT YOU \$50 FOR A GRADUATION DRESS! HE SAYS HE'S PROUD OF YOUR SCHOOL MARKS!

TO GO TO THE CITY AND LOOK FOR A JOB!



I NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING! ANY NORMAL GIRL'D BE PLEASED TO GET A FINE NEW DRESS FOR GRADUATION! WE'LL SHOP FOR IT TOMORROW!

WHAT'S GRADUATION? AFTERWARD EVERYTHING WILL BE JUST AS HOPELESS AND UGLY AS EVER!



I CAN'T STAND IT! THAT MONEY WILL TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE, WHERE I CAN GET A JOB AND MAKE MY OWN LIFE! I'LL LEAVE TONIGHT!



I TOLD MY CONSCIENCE IT WAS REALLY MY MONEY ANYHOW...AND THAT NIGHT WHEN EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP...

I'LL TAKE THE MIDNIGHT BUS! IT'S CHEAPER THAN THE TRAIN AND I CAN LIVE A COUPLE OF WEEKS ON WHAT'S LEFT OVER!



I ARRIVED IN THE BIG TOWN EARLY NEXT MORNING...



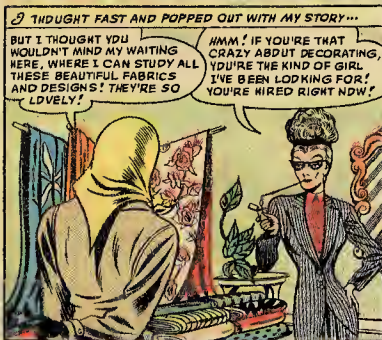
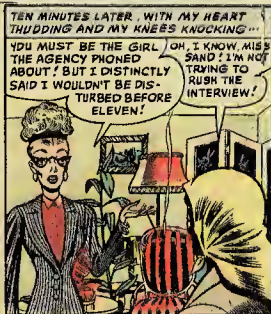
I-I HAD NO IDEA THE CITY WAS SO BIG AND NOISY! HOW WILL I EVER FIND A JOB HERE?

At A CHEAP LUNCH COUNTER, I GOT TO TALKING WITH A GIRL ON THE NEXT STOOL!

I'M CORA PRESTON, FROM IOWA! GEE, I HOPE YOU'RE AS LUCKY AS I WAS AT FINDING A JOB! I'M ALL SET!

THAT'S GRAND, CORA! WHAT KIND OF A JOB?





LOVE CONFESSIONS

SHAME AND GUILT MADE ME FURIOUS!

THE BELL STUDIOS TAKE PICTURES OF ALL MY DECORATING JOBS. LINDA! JIMMY'S A GODO PHOTOGRAPHER BUT A NERVY WHELP AND A WOLF!

I'M SURE ANY CONVERSATION WE HOLD WILL BE CONFINED TO PHOTOGRAPHY!



BUT A FEW DAYS LATER I FORGOT THAT RESOLUTION!

MY APOLOGIES, KITTEN! YOU'RE REALLY HITTING THE BALL ON THIS DECORATING BUSINESS! STELLA SAYS YOU'RE GODO!

SHE DOES? ER... I MEAN, ARE YOU ALWAYS HANGING AROUND? DON'T YOU HAVE ANY OTHER CLIENTS AT ALL?



SURE, HONEY... BUT I CHARGE STELLA DOUBBLE FOR PERSONAL SERVICE AND LET MY ASSISTANTS HANDLE THE COMMON HERD!

VERY INTERESTING! NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I WANT TO FINISH THIS CHAPTER ON MY LUNCH HOUR!



AW, HONEY... CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME! BE CHARITABLE AND LET ME TAKE YOU TO LUNCH SO I CAN MAKE UP FOR THAT BAO STAIN! I'M HUMAN...

I'M NOT ANGRY WITH YOU, JIMMY! IT'S JUST THAT I... WELL...



I HAD STEELED MYSELF TO BE HARD, RELENTLESS, BUT JIMMY BELL'S INFECTIOUS GRIN HAD A WAY OF SOFTENING STEEL...

IF YOU COULD SEE MY HOME, JIMMY, YOU'D UNDERSTAND WHY NOTHING MATTERS TO ME BUT MAKING GOOD!

THAT'S FINE, BUT DON'T LET IT THROW YOU! TAKE TIME TO LIVE A LITTLE! WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE DEAD A LONG, LONG TIME!

BACK-BAR LUNCHEON DINNER



I WISH SHE'D TAKE ME SERIOUSLY, STELLA! IF LINDA MARRY ME I'D EVEN REFORM AND QUIT HANGING AROUND ICE CREAM PARLORS!

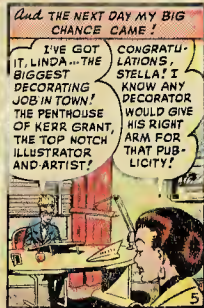
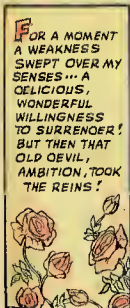
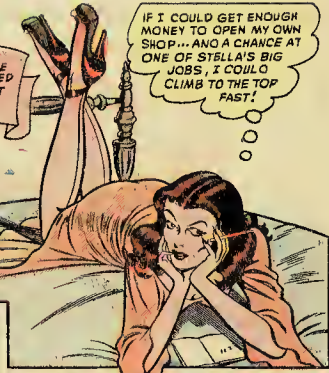
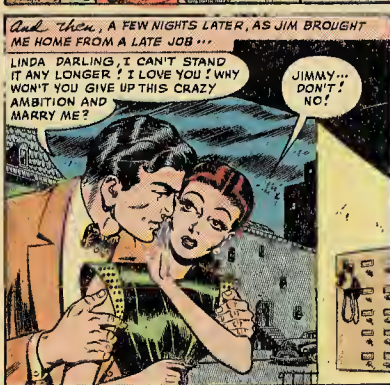
PLEASE, JIMMY! I... I APPRECIATE THE COMPLIMENT, BUT I TOLD YOU NOTHING MATTERS TO ME BUT SUCCESS IN MY WORK!



I SAW A LOT OF JIMMY AFTER THAT! BEHIND HIS BREEZY FRONT WAS A CORE OF COMMON SENSE AND SYMPATHETIC HELP!

I'M GLAD YOU KIDS ARE WORKING TOGETHER NOW! FOR A WHILE I WAS AFRAID YOU'D TAKEN MY KIDDING ABOUT JIMMY SERIOUSLY, LINDA!





LOVE CONFESSIONS

HERE ARE THE PLANS I'VE WORKED OUT! I'M BUSY SO YOU'RE IN FULL CHARGE OF THE JOB! YOU CAN START THIS MORNING, HONEY!

STELLA, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THANK YOU SO MUCH!

DO A GOOD JOB, LINCA, AND I'LL TALK TO YOU ABOUT A PARTNERSHIP HERE WITH ME! I LIKE YOU AND YOUR IDEAS!

I'LL... I'LL DO THE BEST JOB OF MY LIFE, STELLA!

I MEANT IT, UNTIL I GOT TO KERR GRANT'S PENTHOUSE! THE ATMOSPHERE OF WEALTH WAS LIKE A DRUG THAT DULLED MY CONSCIENCE!

MR. GRANT WILL SEE YOU IN HERE, MADAM!

THIS IS WHAT I WANT... ELEGANCE, SUPERIORITY, TO BE POINTED AT AND ENVIED! AND I KNOW HOW TO GET IT NOW!



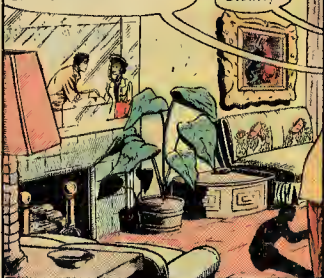
WELL, AFTER SEEING YOU I HAVE MORE RESPECT THAN EVER FOR STELLA'S TASTE! SUCH STYLE! SUCH GRACE...

YOU FLATTER AS DIVINELY AS YOU PAINT, MR. GRANT!

WE GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS OVER TEA ON KERR GRANT'S TERRACE, WITH A VIEW THAT TOOK MY BREATH AWAY!

MUCH AS I HATE TO MENTION BUSINESS, MY DEAR, LET'S HAVE STELLA'S PLANS FOR MY PLACE! I'LL LOOK THEM OVER A BIT!

PLANS? STELLA'S PLANS?



SUDDENLY I LIED, AS I HAD ONCE LIED TO GET THAT JOB, BRAZENLY AND WITHOUT A QUALM!

WHY, STELLA DIDN'T DRAW UP ANY PLANS THIS TIME, KERR! SHE LEFT THE DECORATIVE SCHEME ALL UP TO MY JUDGEMENT!

GOOD LORD, STELLA MUST TRUST YOU! SHE NEVER DID A THING BEFORE WITHOUT GETTING EVERY DETAIL OKAYED!

WE TOURED THE PENTHOUSE AND I EXPLAINED HOW I WOULD REDECORATE USING MY OWN IDEAS!

NOW I UNDERSTAND, LINDA! YOU HAVE THAT FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC THAT STELLA LACKS! I APPROVE EVERY IDEA! GO RIGHT AHEAD!

THANK YOU, KERR! YOU'LL HAVE THE MOST STRIKING AND TALKED-ABOUT PLACE IN TOWN WHEN I'M THROUGH!

AND I'LL BE THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT DECORATOR IN TOWN! POOR STELLA! BUT AS KERR SAYS, SHE LACKS A FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC!



LOVE CONFESSIONS

I PLUNGED EAGERLY INTO THE JOB! THEN, A FEW MORNINGS LATER, AS I STEPPED INTO THE STUDIO TO ASK KERR SOMETHING...

GOOD MORNING, LINDA! COME AND MEET MY FAVORITE MODEL...

CORA!

YOU!



SHE'S A THIEF! LOCK UP THE SILVER OR SHE'LL STEAL IT! YOU CAN'T TRUST HER, KERR! YOU'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HER RIGHT AWAY!

NOW, NOW, CORA! TAKE IT EASY! YOU'RE JUST UPSET! COME ALONG!



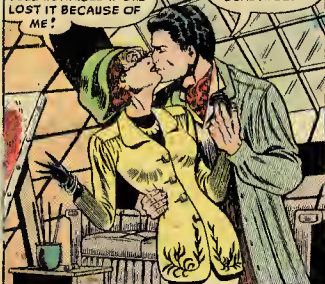
THAT WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT BRAZEN IT OUT!

POOR CHLO! WE NO, NO, LINDA! OF COURSE I DON'T! I'D GET ANOTHER MODEL BEFORE I'D LET YOU GO!



DON'T DO THAT, KERR! SHE'S OVER-EMOTIONAL BUT SWEET! SHE NEEDS HER JOB AND I'D FEEL HORRIBLE IF SHE LOST IT BECAUSE OF ME!

LINDA, YOU'RE AS GENEROUS AND KIND AS YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL!



MY HEART POUNDED... NOT WITH LOVE BUT WITH TRIUMPH! WITH KERR IN MY POWER... NOTHING COULD STOP MY SUCCESS! SUDDENLY...



THE PAIN IN JIMMY'S EYES, MASKED BY HIS BREEZY MANNER, ALMOST BROKE MY RESOLVE! BUT AMBITION WAS STRONGER!

I CAME UP TO SEE HOW YOU WERE MAKING OUT, LINDA! YOU SEEM TO BE DOING OKAY... FOR YOURSELF!

KERR, THIS IS JIMMY BELL, THE BOY WHO TAKES THE PHOTOS OF OUR DECORATING JOBS! WE'RE NOT READY FOR HIM YET!

OKAY! BETTER WIPE THE EXTERIOR DECORATING OFF YOUR MOUTH, KERR! I KNOW HOW HER BRAND STICKS... FROM EXPERIENCE! SO LONG!

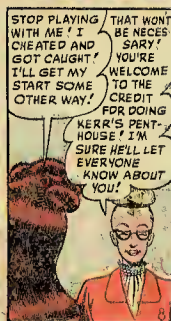
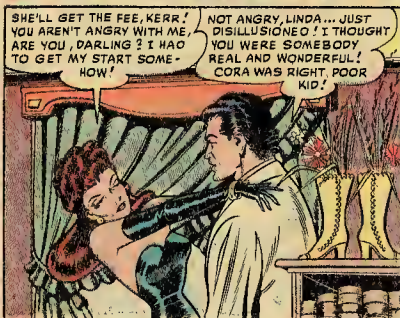
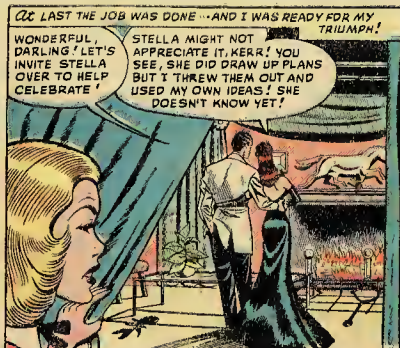
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I NEED YOU, JIMMY!



I'M SORRY, KERR! JIMMY'S A GOOD PHOTOGRAPHER BUT HE'S FRIGHTFULLY JEALOUS... WITH NO REASON! AND STELLA PAMPERS HIM SO!

WHO WOULDN'T BE JEALOUS, DARLING? I'M EVEN JEALOUS OF HIM FOR JUST KNOWING YOU!





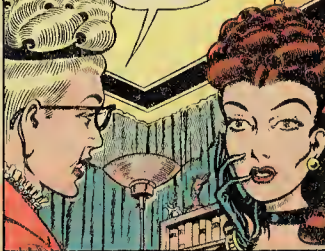
I'LL HELP YOU GET YOUR STUDIO STARTED, DEAR! I'LL EVEN RECOMMEND YOU FOR JOBS I CAN'T HANDLE! I WANT YOU TO BE VERY SUCCESSFUL!

BUT... BUT WHY... AFTER THE WAY I TREATED YOU, STELLA? WHY? YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE KIND TO ME!



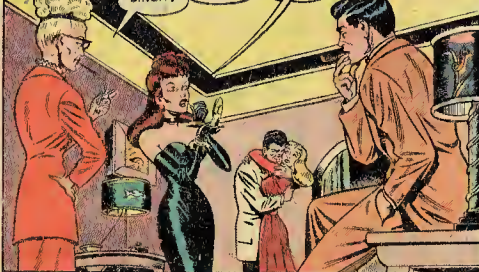
KIND? MY DEAR, MAKING YOU A SUCCESS WILL BE THE CRUELEST PUNISHMENT I COULD WISH ON ANYONE! I'M SORRY FOR YOU!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



I TRADED MY CHANCE AT LOVE FOR A CAREER. I KNOW THE PRICE OF SUCCESS. YOU'LL BEGIN TO PAY THAT PRICE, TOO, LINDA!

WHEN I'M WEALTHY AND FAMOUS I CAN HAVE ANYTHING I WANT!



ANYTHING BUT LOVE, LINDA! YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE! NOW YOU'LL BEGIN TO DISCOVER WHAT LONELINESS IS... AND REGRET!

DON'T BE SILLY AND MELODRAMATIC! I'M TIRED OF LISTENING TO ALL THIS LECTURING!



I HAD TO GET OUT OF THERE... TO SHAKE OFF THE COLD FEAR THAT WAS GROWING IN MY HEART!

TAKE ME HOME, JIMMY! I'M TIRED AND MY HEAD ACHES!

NO, LINDA! YOU CHOSE A LONELY PATH! THERE ISN'T ROOM FOR TWO!



YOU SAID YOU LOVED ME! THEN YOU DIDN'T MEAN IT!

I MEANT IT, LINDA! I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU, I'M AFRAID... BUT I'D NEVER TRUST YOU AGAIN! I WISH YOU LUCK WITH YOUR NEW CAREER!



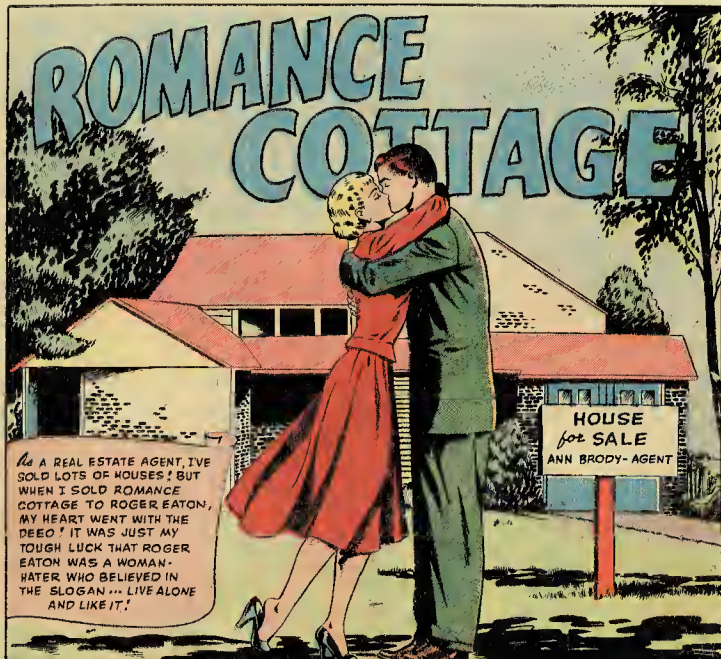
TRY JOHANSEN FOR YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY, LINDA! HE'S A GOOD MAN, AND HE'S FAT AND FIFTYISH! IF YOU NEED ADVICE, CALL ME ANY TIME!



I HAVE WHAT I WANTED NOW... AND STELLA WAS RIGHT! I'D TRADE EVERY TRIUMPH FOR ONE PHONE CALL FROM JIMMY BELL...

MAYBE HE'LL CALL TONIGHT! HE'LL CALL ME SOMEDAY! HE'S GOT TO CALL!





WHEN I FIRST SAW ROGER, HE WAS LOOKING AT MY BUNGALOW LISTINGS AND I THOUGHT ... SOME GIRLS LUCKY!

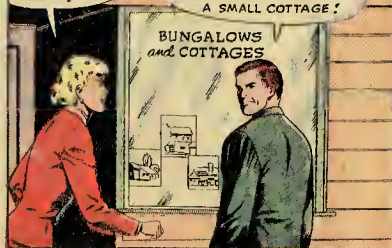
I'M ANN BRODY!
CAN I HELP YOU,
MR. ... ?

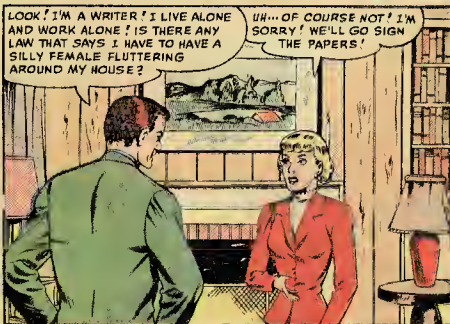
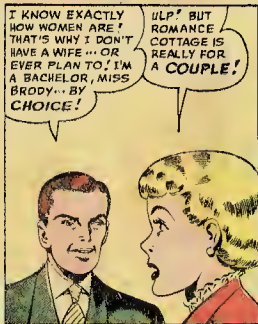
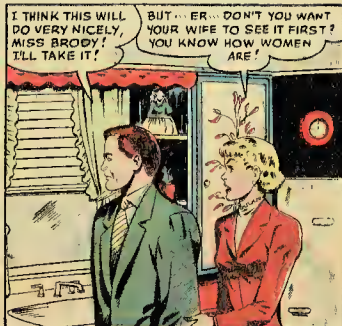
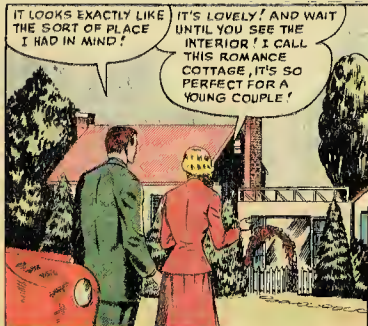
EATON ... ROGER EATON ...
PERHAPS YOU CAN, MISS
BRODY! I'M LOOKING FOR
A SMALL COTTAGE!

THE MISTAKE I MADE WAS A NATURAL ONE!

SOMETHING WITH ABOUT
FIVE ROOMS,
MODERN EFFICIENCY,
NICE FLOWER BEDS,
GOOD LOCATION!

I BELIEVE I HAVE
JUST THE PLACE FOR
YOU, MR. EATON!
COME ALONG AND
I'LL SHOW YOU!





ROGER ARRANGED TO MOVE RIGHT IN! A FEW DAYS LATER I HAD SOME PAPERS FOR HIM TO SIGN...

I'LL TAKE THEM OUT AND APOLOGIZE AT THE SAME TIME FOR MY OUTBURST THE OTHER DAY! NO, WAIT! I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA...



I CLOSED THE OFFICE EARLY AND HURRIED HOME WITH MY HEART POUNDING...

HE'S NEVER SEEN ME REALLY DRESSED UP! IF HE'S ANY GENTLEMAN AT ALL, HE'LL AT LEAST ASK ME OUT TO DINNER!



I DROVE UP TO THE COTTAGE AND MY SENSES FROZE...

FIRE! ROMANCE COTTAGE IS ON FIRE!



HE MUST HAVE GONE OUT SOMEWHERE! WAIT! THERE'S A FIREBOX ON THE CORNER...



OH, I HOPE THEY HURRY! WHAT IF HE'S INSIDE, HURT OR ILL?



THE MOMENTS UNTIL THE FIRE ENGINE CAME SEEMED LIKE HOURS!

PLEASE, PLEASE HURRY!

TAKE IT EASY, LADY! IF HE'S IN THERE, WE'LL GET HIM OUT! IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE FIRE HAD MUCH START YET!



OH...! ROGER!

WHAT IS THIS? YOUR IDEA OF A JOKE? I SUPPOSE WOMEN NEVER GET PREOCCUPIED AND LET THEIR DINNERS BURN?



LOVE CONFESSIONS



LOVE CONFESSIONS

IT WAS HEAVENLY COOKING FOR ROGER IN HIS OWN KITCHEN! MAYBE THIS WAS MY CHANCE TO AROUSE HIS INTEREST...

I TAKE BACK ALL I EVER SAID ABOUT WOMAN'S EFFICIENCY! YOU'RE WONDERFUL, ANN! BUT THERE'S ONE THING MISSING...

WHAT'S THAT, ROGER?



IF WE'D GONE OUT AS I SUGGESTED, WE COULD HAVE HAD DINNER DANCING!

WITH MUSIC LIKE THAT, WHO WANTS TO GO OUT?



ROGER'S ARMS WERE WARM SHELTERS THAT COULD FEND OFF ANY STORMS LIFE SENT...

YOU'RE A PRETTY WONDERFUL DANCER, YOUNG LADY! DO YOU HAVE TO ENTERTAIN PROSPECTS TO CLOSE YOUR REAL ESTATE DEALS?

SOMETIMES! BUT IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A QUARREL... OR A GOOD DANCING TEAM...



...OR A ROMANCE, ANN! WE'VE MADE A PRETTY GOOD TEAM AT QUARRELING AND DANCING! I WONDER...

YOU'RE NOT A BAD SALESMAN YOURSELF, MR. EATON! IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT, I MIGHT BUY YOUR DEAL!



ROGER'S KISS WAS TENDERNESS AND DEVOTION, PROMISE AND PLEA! BUT IN THE MIST OF IT...



SNIFF-SNIFF! ANN, SOMETHING'S BURNING!

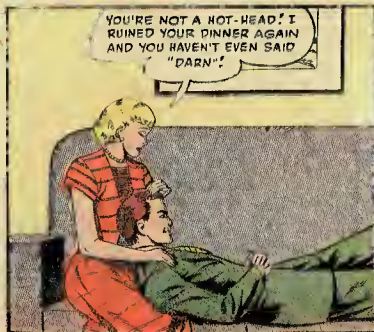
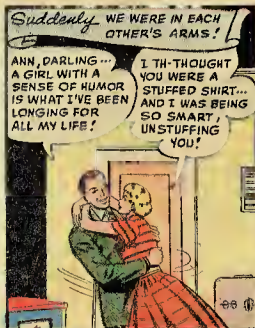
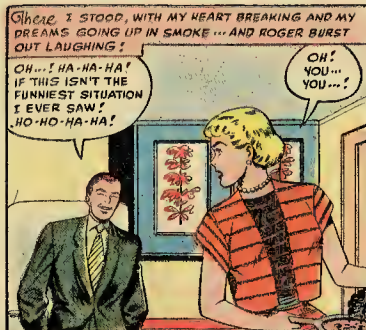
MY DINNER!



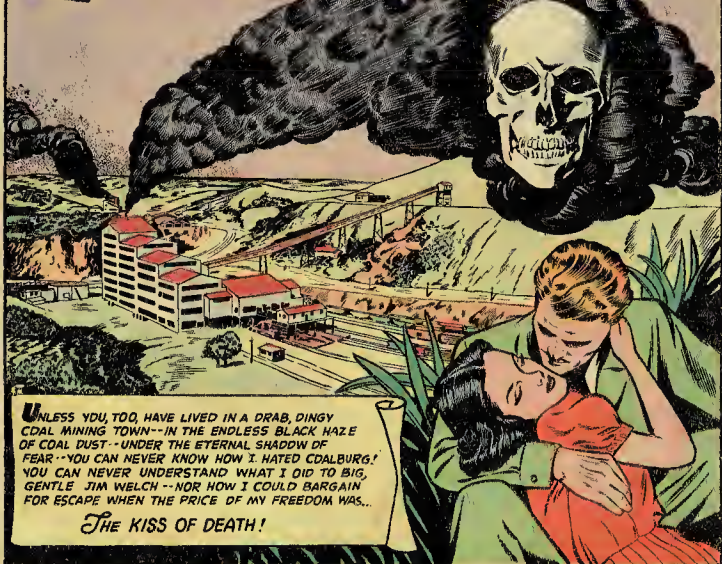
IT'S RUINED!

OH, FOR THE LUVVA GOSH! YOU, TOO...?





LOVE under a CLOUD



UNLESS YOU, TOO, HAVE LIVED IN A DRAB, DINGY COAL MINING TOWN--IN THE ENDLESS BLACK HAZE OF COAL DUST--UNDER THE ETERNAL SHADOW OF FEAR--YOU CAN NEVER KNOW HOW I HATED COALBURG! YOU CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT I DID TO BIG, GENTLE JIM WELCH--NOR HOW I COULD BARGAIN FOR ESCAPE WHEN THE PRICE OF MY FREEDOM WAS...

THE KISS OF DEATH!

IN COALBURG THE MORNINGS WERE ALL ALIKE...

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU SPEND SO MUCH TIME WASHING, DAD! IN TEN MINUTES YOU'LL BE BLACK WITH COAL DUST AGAIN!

WASHING'S GOOD FOR THE SOUL, DEL! IT DOES A MAN GOOD TO FEEL CLEAN...AND THERE ARE DIRTIER THINGS IN THE WORLD THAN COAL DUST!



I CAN'T IMAGINE IT! THIS WHOLE HATEFUL TOWN IS FILTHY! MOTHER WORKED HERSELF TO DEATH TRYING TO KEEP THIS SHANTY CLEAN!

DON'T BE BITTER, CHILD! BANKERS GET INK STAINS AND GARAGE MEN GET GREASE! EVERY JOB HAS ITS DIRT!

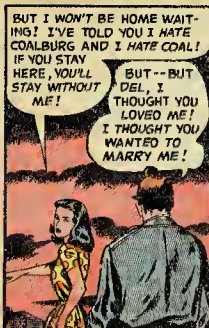


ONCE YOU MARRY JIM WELCH AND GET YOUR OWN LITTLE HOUSE, IT WON'T SEEM LIKE SUCH HARD WORK! YOUR MOTHER NEVER COMPLAINED!

AND SHE'S DEAD! I'M NOT MARRYING

THAT KIND OF FUTURE FOR ANYBODY! COME ON, DAD, I'LL WALK DOWN WITH YOU!



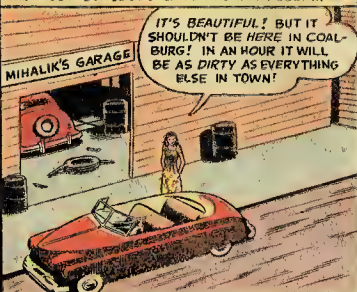


WHAT WAS THE USE? JIM WOULDN'T CHANGE! THE HOPELESSNESS OF IT WAS IN EVERY STUBBORN LINE OF HIS BIG BODY AS HE VANISHED!



HE'LL KEEP GOING DOWN AND I'LL KEEP FIGHTING COAL DUST--AND SOME DAY HE WON'T COME UP AGAIN! THAT ISN'T LIVING!

I TURNED HOMEWARD AND STOPPED! THERE STOOD THE MOST GORGEOUS CAR I HAD EVER SEEN...



IT'S BEAUTIFUL! BUT IT SHOULDN'T BE HERE IN COALBURG! IN AN HOUR IT WILL BE AS DIRTY AS EVERYTHING ELSE IN TOWN!

I DIDN'T REALIZE I HAD SPOKEN ALOUD, UNTIL...

TELL THAT TO MY CARBURETOR, HONEY CHILD! BUT AFTER ONE LOOK AT YOU, IT WON'T BELIEVE YOU! YOU MUST LIVE IN A BATHTUB!

OH...! I--I DIDN'T REALIZE I SPOKE ALOUD! I'M SORRY!



ALL OF A SUDDEN I DON'T CARE IF MY CAR NEVER GETS FIXED! MY NAME'S AL PACE, HONEY--AND YOURS MUST BE ANGEL-FACE!

YOU'RE FLATTERING ME, MR. PACE, BUT IT'S A VERY ORDINARY NAME! DELLA MORRIS--DEL, TO MY FRIENDS!



I KNEW IT WAS WRONG--BUT AL'S BOLD WORDS AND ADMIRING EYES STIRRED MY PULSES, HINTED AT THE OUTSIDE WORLD OF GLAMOUR AND EXCITEMENT THAT I YEARNED FOR.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN A DREARY HOLE LIKE COALBURG?

UNTIL NOW, I WAS DYING, BABY! SOME JERK SAID THIS WAS A SHORT-CUT BACK TO THE BIG TOWN FROM HARRISBURG, AND I FELL FOR IT!



BUT I'M WONDERING THE SAME THING! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE WHEN BROADWAY'S PANTING FOR A FIGURE AND FACE LIKE YOURS?

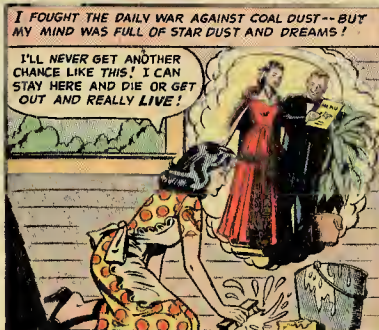
BROADWAY? IS THAT WHERE YOU ARE FROM, AL? I'VE NEVER SEEN IT! IS IT AS WONDERFUL AS THEY SAY?



BABY, IT'S THE WHOLE WORLD IN ONE LITTLE TIGHT SPOT! WHY DON'T YOU COME ALONG WITH ME AND SEE IT? YOU'D BE A KNOCKOUT THERE!

I'LL GET THERE SOME DAY! I WON'T BE STUCK IN THIS DISMAL SPOT FOREVER!







THEY CLOSED THAT BECAUSE IT WASN'T SAFE! THEY SAID IT MIGHT CAVE IN ANYTIME! DAD, YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE!

JIM'S TAKING A CREW IN TO PUT UP NEW SHORING IN THE MORNING, HONEY! IT'LL BE SAFE WHEN HE GETS THROUGH!



I WAS STUNNED! TWO MONTHS AGO A HEAVY TRUCK TAKING THE MOUNTAIN ROAD HAD SHAKEN THE GROUND OVER THE WEAK SHAFT...



THREE MEN DIED IN THE CAVE-IN CAUSED BY THOSE VIBRATIONS.

EEEEHHH! WE'RE CAUGHT!



BY THE TIME JIM CAME, I WAS FRANTIC WITH TERROR AND WORRY!

JIM! JIM! YOU CAN'T GO INTO BIG DRIFT TOMORROW! YOU MUSTN'T!

NOW, DEL, YOU'RE JUST UPSET! IT'S PART OF MY NEW JOB TO TIMBER THAT UP SO IT IS SAFE! STOP WORRYING! LET'S GO FOR A WALK!



I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU, HONEY! BEN HOVACEC WILL RENT US HIS HOUSE! IT'S ON A HILLTOP, ABOVE THE SMOKE AND DUST, WITH A LITTLE GARDEN!

STOP IT, JIM! THERE'S NO USE GOING ON LIKE THIS...



I'VE MADE UP MY MIND! IF YOU GO INTO BIG DRIFT TOMORROW, WE'RE THROUGH! I CAN'T STANO THIS KIND OF LIFE ANY LONGER!

DEL, THAT ISN'T FAIR! I'VE GOT A GOOD FUTURE HERE! I DON'T KNOW ANY OTHER KIND OF WORK! WHAT ELSE COULD I DO?



YOU COULD DIG DITCHES --AND YOU WOULD IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME! ANYTHING TO TAKE ME OUT OF THIS FILTHY HOLE!

YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT, HONEY. THERE'S A RISK IN EVERY JOB! THIS IS MY WORK AND MY PLACE!



IT ISN'T MY PLACE, AND I'M LEAVING! HERE'S YOUR RING! GIVE IT TO SOMEBODY TOO STUPID TO MIND HOW SHE EXISTS!

ALL RIGHT, DEL! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL...

I ALMOST CRIED OUT FOR JIM TO COME BACK... BUT SUDDENLY ANOTHER VOICE SPKE FROM THE SHADWS!

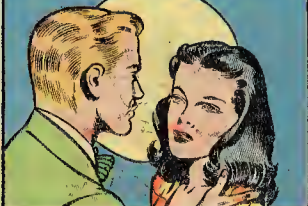
THAT'S SMART, BABY! YOU'RE TOO NEAT A PACKAGE TO STAY LOST IN THIS HOLE! YOU'VE GOT A FUTURE TO THINK ABOUT! I'M GLAD I HAPPENED TO BE PASSING BY AND OVERHEARD YOU!

AL... I THOUGHT YOU'D GONE!



I TOLD YOU I'D SEE YOU AGAIN! THERE'S A DANCE OVER AT DENTON! LET'S GO SHOW THE YOKELS HOW IT'S DONE BY EXPERTS!

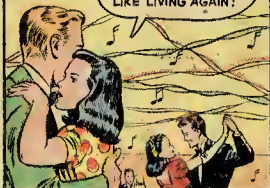
ALL RIGHT! IT'S TIME I HAD SOME FUN FOR A CHANGE! LET'S GO, AL!



I WAS HURT AND FRIGHTENED -- BUT I FORCED THE THOUGHTS OF JIM ASIDE! I WANTED ESCAPE AND AL PACE WAS MY KEY TO FREEDOM!

LIKE IT, HONEY?

DO I ACT LIKE I'M CRYING, AL? YOU KNOW I LIKE IT! JUST BEING OUT OF COALBURG IS LIKE LIVING AGAIN!



ON THE WAY HOME, AL PULLED OFF THE ROAD...

I KNEW I WASN'T MAKING ANY MISTAKE WHEN I STAYED OVER IN THIS BURG, SUGAR! YOU AND I CAN GO PLACES AND DO THINGS TOGETHER! COME HERE...!

AL -- WAIT! DON'T...



I'M TIRED OF WAITING, BABY! WHY POSTPONE THE GOOD THINGS UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE?



JIM HAD NEVER KISSED ME LIKE THAT! ALL MY FEARS AND DOUBTS WERE SWEEPED AWAY BEFORE THE PROMISE OF THOSE DEMANDING LIPS...

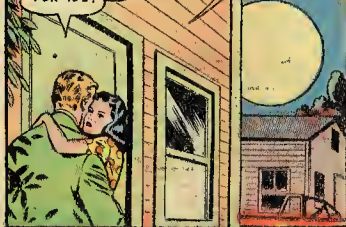
I'M LEAVING AT EIGHT TOMORROW, BABY! HAVE YOUR BAG PACKED AND I'LL PICK YOU UP! WE'LL BE ON BROADWAY BY NIGHT!

YES -- YES, AL! DAD GOES TO WORK AT SEVEN! I'LL BE READY! I NEVER WANT TO SEE COALBURG AGAIN!



EIGHT O'CLOCK, HONEY! AND TOMORROW NIGHT I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE CLASSIEST NIGHT CLUB ON BROADWAY! IT'S THE BRIGHT LIGHTS FOR YOU!

I'LL BE WAITING, AL! JUST TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE QUICKLY!



I COULDN'T SLEEP! WHEN DOUBTS AND FEARS CREEPT IN I BURIED THEM DEEP UNDER THE WAVES OF EXCITEMENT AND THE GLITTER OF DREAMS!

AL SAID HE'D GET ME A CHORUS JOB! I CAN MAKE ENOUGH TO SEND FOR DAD! HE WON'T HAVE TO GO DOWN INTO THE MINES ANY MORE!

WHEN AL ARRIVED I WAS READY!

COME ALONG, SUGAR! WE'VE GOT MILES TO MAKE TODAY AND I WANT TO BUY YOU A FANCY DRESS TO WEAR TONIGHT!

OH, AL--I'M SO EXCITED I CAN HARDLY BREATHE!

SUDDENLY WE CAME TO A SIGN THAT SENT A STAB OF FEAR THROUGH MY HEEDLESS EXCITEMENT!

NOT THIS ROAD, AL! TAKE THE OTHER TURN!

AND GO MILES OUT OF OUR WAY? STOP WORRYING, HONEY! YOU DON'T WANT TO ARRIVE TOO LATE TO BUY THAT NEW PRESS, DO YOU?

WARNING! NO TRUCKS OR HEAVY TRAFFIC BECAUSE MINE SHUTS BELOW

AL SENT THE ROADSTER RACING UPWARD--AND SUDDENLY IT HAPPENED!

HEY! THE ROAD'S SHAKING! WHAT IS IT... AN EARTHQUAKE?

THE MINE! THE BIG DRIFT IS CAVING IN AGAIN! STOP! STOP THE CAR!

THEN I HEARD IT--THE MOST CHILLING, TERRIFYING SOUND IN ANY MINING TOWN...

WHAT TH...? LET'S GET GOING, BABY!

THE DISASTER WHISTLE! THAT MEANS A BAD CAVE-IN, WITH MEN TRAPPED UNDERGROUND! JIM'S DOWN THERE IN THE BIG DRIFT!

I'VE GOT TO GO TO HIM! JIM'S DOWN THERE, TRAPPED! HE MAY BE DEAD AND IT'S ALL MY FAULT! LET ME GO!

NOTHING DOING, SISTER! I DIDN'T HANG AROUND JUST TO BE BRUSHED OFF FOR SOME DUMB COAL-DIGGER!

WE MADE A DEAL AND YOU'RE GOING THROUGH WITH IT --OOOF!

LET ME GO! I WAS A BLIND FOOL... BUT MY EYES ARE OPEN NOW!

I LEFT AL BESIDE HIS FLASHY ROADSTER, CURSING ME! IN THOSE TERRIBLE, TERROR-RIDDEN MINUTES OF RUNNING, I DISCOVERED THE TRUTHS I HAD BURIED SO DEEPLY...

JIM! DAD! NOTHING ELSE MATTERS! ARE THEY-- ARE THEY...

TAKE IT EASY, DELLA! THEY'RE TRAPPED IN BIG DRIFT BUT WE'RE DIGGING THROUGH! THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THEY'RE SAFE!

THROUGH THE HOURS OF WAITING, I SAW MY SELF IN A NEW LIGHT! THIS WAS MY LIFE-- THESE WERE MY NEIGHBORS!

MY FRED IS DOWN THERE! IF HE DOESN'T COME UP, WHAT WILL I DO?

HE'LL COME UP, MRS. VERCEK! THEY ALL WILL! WE'LL BRING THEM UP WITH OUR COURAGE AND OUR PRAYERS!

GOOD NEWS! WE'VE ESTABLISHED CONTACT AND PUT AN AIRLINE THROUGH! THEY'RE ALL ALIVE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FALL!

ALIVE! THEN I'VE GOT ANOTHER CHANCE... A CHANCE TO ATONE FOR MY SELFISHNESS AND WEAKNESS!

IT WAS NEARLY MORNING WHEN THEY BROUGHT THEM UP--EXHAUSTED BUT SAFE!

DAD! JIM! OH, THANK HEAVEN!

DEL!

HONEY, YOU'RE ALL COAL DUST! YOUR DRESS WILL BE RUINED!

WHO CARES! THERE ARE DIRTIER THINGS IN THE WORLD THAN COAL DUST! I DON'T WANT TO LET GO OF EITHER OF YOU!

YOU MEAN THAT, HONEY? YOU'RE WILLING TO STAY HERE AND LIVE AND WAIT FOR A MAN TO COME OUT OF THE MINES EACH NIGHT?

DIG OUT THAT RING, JIM WELCH, AND SEE HOW MUCH I MEAN IT!

THEN JIM'S ARMS WERE AROUND ME--TENDER YET STRONG--BULWARKS AGAINST ALL MY FEARS AND DOUBTS FOREVER!

I WAS WRONG, JIM! HAPPINESS IS WHERE LOVE IS! YOU'RE MY LIFE! IT'S HATE THAT MAKES PEOPLE OLD--AND LOVE THAT KEEPS THEM YOUNG!

OH, MY PRECIOUS DARLING! THEN TODAY WAS WORTH-WHILE--AND TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER! ALL OUR TOMORROWS WILL BE BETTER!



My Love Confession

THE stranger came threading his way around the edge of the dance floor with a purposeful look that made my heart pound. There was no mistaking his goal. He meant to ask me to dance—and though he couldn't know it then, I meant to accept.

I threw a covert glance toward the soda fountain. Ed, my boy friend, was there, his big shoulders standing above the crowd as he waited patiently for his turn to get the cokes I had suddenly demanded. Poor big, patient Ed. Sometimes I was ashamed of the way I abused and neglected him. Then I would be sweet and kind for a few days until boredom, or that streak of wild recklessness I could never control, would spoil my good intentions.

That recklessness was surging up in me now as the handsome stranger strolled up, his dark eyes dancing with interest and undisguised admiration. His white teeth flashed in a grin. "I know it isn't correct for strangers to barge in around here but I'm not noted for being very correct. I want to dance with you."

I laughed. "Do you know my nickname around town? They call me 'Reckless' Riley. What are we waiting for?"

He swept me into his arms with a strength that was both exciting and a little frightening. But as always, the very hint of danger brought my recklessness to a fever heat. Our cheeks touched and I made no effort to draw away.

"My name is Dave Rocklin," he said. "I must remember to thank your overgrown boy friend for trotting off to the soda fountain so conveniently just then."

"Ed?" I smiled boldly into his admiring eyes. "Why not thank me for getting thirsty so conveniently?"

Dave pulled me closer and murmured against my ear, "Reckless, sweet, when we're alone will you please kick me once, good and hard? I'm the smart boy who almost talked himself out of spending a week in this town because I thought I'd die of boredom."

"If you find a cure," I said, "tell me. I've been dying of boredom here for years."

"I've found it," Dave whispered softly. "By spending lots of time together, I may be able to pass it along to you."

He was a marvelous dancer and I saw plenty of the girls I knew staring at him in envy as we whirled around the floor. They might envy me but not one of them would have dared respond to such a bold pickup. They called me Reckless—but in their hearts they were all jealous, I told myself.

The thought of Ed suddenly made me look toward the seat I had left. He was standing there, holding two bottles of coke, a strange expression on his big, pleasant face. For a moment my conscience twinged. Then Dave swung me around and when I looked again Ed had disappeared. Only the two bottles sat waiting on the chair.

"He's gone," Dave said with mock sadness. "Now I suppose I'll be stuck to take you home, since I scared off your escort."

I pretended to look meek and solemn. "I'll try not to be a burden to you, kind sir."

When the dance was over Dave led the way to the parking lot where a low-slung yellow convertible stood apart from the coupes and sedans and ancient jalopies of the crowd. I knew. My breath caught. "What a gorgeous car, Dave! I'll bet it'll do a hundred. How I'd like to have my hands on that wheel."

Dave laughed and held out a ring of keys. "Why not, Reckless? Who am I to let the insurance company get off too easily?"

My pulses pounded and my breath was tight in my throat as I pressed down on the throttle and felt the surging power of the big engine under the hood. I had never driven a car like this before.

Dave leaned over and kissed me and for a moment my own lips took fire as I returned his ardor. Suddenly he started and his hand snatched the wheel. "Take it easy, baby. Even in a car like this, the driver has to glance at the road now and then."

"Scared?" I challenged as I finished whipping the big yellow hood away from a looming ditch and back onto the highway. "It's ten miles out to Janey's Country Club. Bet I can make it in ten minutes, curves and all."

Dave said something but it was drowned in the roar of unleashed power as I slammed the throttle to the floor. The highway streaked to

ward us in the path of the headlights. Fences and telephone poles flickered by. A curve came and vanished with hardly a lurch of the wheels. I laughed aloud, exulting in the thrill of danger. Let the stick-in-the-muds be cautious. This was exciting, thrilling—this was *living*!

And this stranger pressed close to me, one arm encircling my shoulders—he was danger and excitement, too. I did not even pretend to be ignorant of the danger. There could be no innocent, casual flirtation with Dave Rocklin. There was too much fire and recklessness in him, too. But in my mood of daring, I was beyond heeding the small voice of warning. I can take care of myself, I thought. I can handle any situation.

Where the old car came from then I will never know. One moment the highway seemed empty; the next moment I saw this ancient sedan crawling and bumping up from some invisible side road, directly into my path.

I screamed and my foot slammed the brake. I caught a glimpse of a white frightened face in the old sedan a moment before the yellow convertible slammed into the back wheel at a sharp angle. Then the whole world dissolved into a maelstrom of lights and darkness, of screaming tires and rending metal, of searing pain and the loud, clear echo of a man's voice groaning.

When I opened my eyes, sunlight was streaming in a window. I lay, swathed in bandages, in a small white hospital room and a tall, beautiful girl I had never seen before stood looking down at me. I managed a weak smile. "Hello. Who—who are you?"

There was no answering smile. "My name isn't important. I'm Dave Rocklin's fiancée. We were to have been married next week."

"Dave?" I cried. "How is he? Is he—?"

"He'll recover," the girl said gravely. "The wedding will have to be postponed, that's all. When I got the news of this, I flew here at once. I had to see you. I wanted to know what kind of a girl Dave was with when it happened. So much depended on knowing."

"What do you—mean?" I whispered.

"If you had been another type of girl, one in whom his interest might be serious, I'd have gone home again and let him drop. But I'm not worried now. I know your type. You're the anything-for-a-thrill kind of girl. Driving too fast, living too fast—nothing else matters to you but excitement. You were only together that night for excitement. You mean nothing to him, I can see, so you'll be easily forgotten."

Before I could bring a cry of protest to my numbed lips she had turned away. She paused for a moment in the open doorway. "I am sorry for you—really sorry. The real job of living is like beautiful scenery. If you go too fast, you miss it completely."

I lay back on the pillow, feeling the dull ache of shame spread through me. That was what I had heard from others, time and again, but it had never struck home so deeply before. I had always told myself I didn't care, had plunged into some new recklessness to forget. Now for the first time I could see myself as I really was and it was not a pretty picture.

A plain-faced nurse came in, lifting her eyebrows at the sight of my raised head. "I see you're awake at last. Feeling better?"

I nodded, sensing the coldness of disapproval and dislike under her professional sympathy. "That car I hit," I demanded tightly. "Did—were the people in it—?" I couldn't force myself to go on, to finish the terrible question that hung like a pall over my heart.

"Luckily for you," the nurse said curtly, "you struck too far back to do more than wreck their car. They were bruised a little but not seriously. As a matter of fact, you were lucky all around. The boy you were riding with got off with a broken leg and you escaped with only bruises."

"Lucky," I repeated dully. "It was luckier than you know, nurse. I might have paid a far higher price for the lesson I learned."

The nurse eyed me oddly, caught by the tone of my voice. Then she motioned toward a bunch of flowers on the dresser across the room. "A great big fellow left those flowers for you a little while ago."

My heart leaped. "Ed! Where is he, nurse? I want to see him."

"Oh, he didn't stay. When he learned you would be out in a few days, he seemed quite relieved. He said to tell you he wished you a speedy recovery and that he'd drive around at the end of the week to give you a lift home."

"End of the week?" I cried, hurt and bewildered. "But that's not for days. Did he mean he wasn't coming to see me before that?"

The nurse shrugged. "I wouldn't know, but my guess is he planned to be busy. There was a mighty pretty, quiet girl waiting for him out in the car, I noticed."

I lay back and closed my eyes. Now at last I saw the price tag Life puts on recklessness—a price that only years of loneliness could pay.

TEMPEST in the TIMBER

YOU CAN'T GROW UP IN TOUGH LOGGING CAMPS AND BE A CLINGING VINE TYPE! LUMBER-JACKS CALLED ME RUSTY ROURKE THE VENUS WITH THE CAST-IRON HEART, AND SAID I'D NEVER FALL IN LOVE WITH ANY MAN! BUT IRON CAN MELT... AND I FELL IN LOVE WITH RANGER DAVE BENNETT! ONLY DAVE HAD HIS DUTY TO DO... AND THAT DUTY WAS TO SMASH DAD'S COMPANY AND SEND US TO PRISON!

DAD'S DUTIF WAS LOGGING ON A HALF MILLION ACRE TRACT OF GOVERNMENT TIMBER! I WAS BOOKKEEPER AND CNECKER...

MARK DOWN ANOTHER BIG STICK FOR THE ROURKE LUMBER COMPANY, RUSTY!

GOT IT, DAD!

TIMBER-R-R!

DAD! LODK OUT! THE GUIDE CABLE'S SNAPPED!

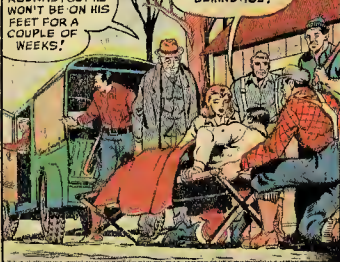
AAAAH!
DAD! HELP SOMEBODY!



AN HOUR LATER...

IT ISN'T TOO SERIOUS, MISS ROURKE, BUT HE WOULDN'T BE ON HIS FEET FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS!

YOU'LL HAVE TO BOSS THE OUTFIT, RUSTY! KEEP THE TIMBER DROPPING! THE MEN'LL STAND BEHIND YOU!



BIG MIKE PEAVY, THE BOSS LOGGER GOT THINGS ROLLING AGAIN!

THANKS, MIKE! I KNEW YOU'D KEEP THE JOB MOVING FOR DAD!

NOT FOR TOM ROURKE, RUSTY, AND YOU KNOW IT! I'M DOING IT FOR YOU!



YOU KNOW I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOU, RUSTY! WHY DON'T YOU QUIT PLAYING HARD TO GET? I'M ALL THE MAN A WOMAN NEEDS!

CUT IT OUT, MIKE! WE'VE GONE OVER ALL THAT BEFORE! I'M JUST NOT INTERESTED AND THAT'S FINAL!



NOT WITH ME IT AIN'T MONEY! TAMING A TOUGH LOGGING CREW OR A WILD CAT WOMAN... IT'S ALL THE SAME TO BIG MIKE PEAVY!

MIKE YOU EGOTISTICAL BEAST, LET ME GO!



WHEN I'M READY... AND I'M NOT READY YET!

YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT...



OWOOOFF!

SATISFIED NOW?

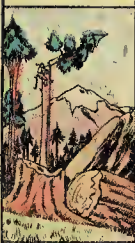


GET BACK TO WORK OR DRAW YOUR TIME! AND IF IT HAPPENS AGAIN, THERE WON'T BE ANY CHOICE!

OKAY, BUT YOU'LL SING A DIFFERENT TUNE SOME FINE DAY, AND YOU CAN TAKE MIKE PEAVY'S WORD FOR IT, SISTER!



FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS I WAS TOO BUSY TO WORRY ABOUT MIKE PEAVY! IN THE WOODS, THE BIG TREES FELL...



AND DAY BY DAY WE WHITTLED DOWN OUR QUOTA! I WAS PROUD AND DAD WAS PLEASED, RECUPERATING WITH AN EASY MIND!

SCRATCH THREE MORE STICKS, RUSTY!

THEY'RE SCRATCHED, ED! WATCH THAT HAIRPIN TURN DOWN THE GRADE!



BUT I WASN'T TOO BUSY TO BE AWARE THAT WHENEVER MIKE PEAVY WASN'T BULLYING HIS CREW, HE WAS STALKING ME!



I'LL PRETEND I DON'T SEE HIM! BUT WHEN DAD COMES BACK ON THE JOB, MIKE AND I WILL HAVE THIS OUT, ONCE AND FOR ALL!

And THEN TROUBLE CAUGHT UP...

'MORNING, MA'AM! I'M U.S. FOREST RANGER DAVE BENNETT! WHERE'LL I FIND THE BOSS OF THIS OUTFIT?

I'M BOSS WHILE DAD'S IN THE HOSPITAL! RUSTY ROURKE'S THE NAME! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?



WHY... I GUESS YOU CAN TAG ALONG WHILE I INSPECT YOUR CUTTINGS! THAT'S PART OF MY JOB, YOU KNOW!

I KNOW! THE GOVERNMENT LETS US LOG OFF THE FOREST IF WE TAKE ONLY THE TREES THEY MARK!



THAT'S RIGHT! IT LEAVES YOUNG TREES TO GROW UP IN THE FUTURE!

I KNOW ALL THAT! I WAS LOGGING BEFORE YOU KNEW A TREE FROM A TEETHING RING!



SOMETHING WAS HAPPENING TO ME! MY HEART WAS BUMPING AND MY FEET WERE SUDDENLY CLUMSY!

OOPS!

CAREFUL, MISS ROURKE!



And THEN, WITH DAVE'S STRONG HANDS HOLDING ME, I KNEW WHAT IT WAS THAT WAS HAPPENING TO ME...

UH...TH-THANKS, DAVE! WE'D BETTER GET ON TO THE CUTTING CREW!

YES... YES, WE HAD, RUSTY! THE "ER...INSPECTION, OF COURSE!

I WAS SO DAZED I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE WE WERE STILL HOLDING HANDS... UNTIL I CAUGHT MIKE'S FURIOUS GLARE!

THE TIMBER CRUISER STAMPED THE TREES WE WERE TO CUT, DAVE! YOU CAN SEE WE'RE LEAVING THE NURSE TREES STANDING!

EVERYTHING SEEMS IN ORDER, RUSTY! WITH LEGITIMATE DUTIFTS THESE INSPECTIONS ARE ONLY ROUTINE ANY-HOW!

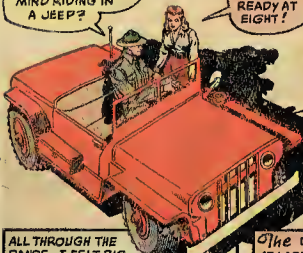
RUSTY, THERE'S A DANCE AT PARKER TONIGHT! WOULD YOU GO WITH ME. IF YOU DON'T MIND RIDING IN A JEEP?

I'D... I'D LOVE TO, DAVE! I'LL BE READY AT EIGHT!

WHEN I HEARD THE JEEP AT EIGHT, I RAN OUT WITH MY HEART POUNDING AND MY HEAD IN A WHIRL! THIS WAS NEW...THIS WAS WONDERFUL...THIS WAS LOVE!

WHY...WHY, RUSTY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE LOVELY! I WAS WRONG! YOU'RE GORGEOUS!

THANKS, DAVE! I DON'T DOLL UP LIKE THIS VERY OFTEN! I FEEL LIKE SOME STRANGER!



ALL THROUGH THE DANCE, I FELT BIG MIKE'S FURY AS HE WATCHED US...

RUSTY, WHO IS THAT BIG BRUISER WHO LOOKS AS IF HE'D LIKE TO TEAR ME APART?

BIG MIKE PEAVY, OUR BOSS LOGGER! I HAD TO PUT HIM IN HIS PLACE A FEW TIMES AND HE RESENTS IT! BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT HIM!

THE DANCE ENDED AT LAST AND DAVE BROUGHT ME HOME!

RUSTY, SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO ME! I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT BECAUSE IT... IT NEVER HAPPENED TO ME BEFORE!

YOU NEEDN'T EXPLAIN, DAVE, BECAUSE IT'S HAPPENED TO ME, TOO, FOR THE FIRST TIME!

OH, RUSTY, RUSTY... I LOVE YOU! I WANT YOU ALWAYS!

DAVE, DARLING, I LOVE YOU, TOO! HOLD ME TIGHTLY, MY DEAREST! NEVER LET ME GO!





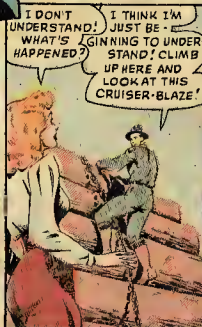
I COULDN'T SLEEP THAT NIGHT... AND NEXT MORNING MY SUSPICIONS WERE SHARPER ...



Dave, I'M SURE GLAD TO SEE YOU. WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK STRANGE!

I FEEL STRANGE! RUSTY, I WANT TO SEE YOUR LOADS BEFORE THEY ROLL THIS MORNING! DON'T LET ONE LEAVE UNTIL I CHECK IT!

Dave PHONED EVERY DAY, BUT HE WAS TOO BUSY TO COME OUT UNTIL THE NEXT WEEK ...





ONE MIGHT BE AN ACCIDENT... BUT YOUR LOADS HAVE CONTAINED FIVE ILLEGAL TREES IN THE PAST THREE DAYS! THIS ONE MAKES SIX!

NO, DAVE, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WE'RE ONLY CUTTING STAMPED TREES! YOU DON'T THINK-?

I'M THROUGH BEING A FOOL, RUSTY! THIS WAS DONE DELIBERATELY! DID YOU THINK FALLING IN LOVE WOULD BLIND ME TO MY WORK SO I WOULDN'T CHECK YOUR LOADS?

DAVE! YOU CAN'T THINK THAT!



YOU DID A NICE JOB, RUSTY! BUT I'M WIDE AWAKE NOW! I'M GOING THROUGH TO BOX CANYON, CHECKING EVERY MARK ON UNCUT TREES AND IF I FIND ANY MORE FAKE MARKS, YOU'LL LOSE YOUR CONTRACT AND BE SUBJECT TO FINE AND POSSIBLE IMPRISONMENT! THAT'S THE LAW!

I WAS OAZEO, HURT, SHOCKED! AND THEN I CAUGHT THE TRIUMPHANT SNEER ON BIG MIKE'S FACE AND THE TRUTH HIT ME --



YOU... YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING AND THIS MUST HAVE BEEN YOUR A BLAZE TREE, WE WORK! YOU PUT THOSE CUT IT! NOBODY'S GOT FALSE BLAZES ON TIME TO STOP AND FOR REVENGE AND EXAMINE EVERY TO MAKE DAVE TURN BLAZE! AGAINST ME!

YOU CAN'T PROVE IT, RUSTY! WHEN WE SEE MUST HAVE BEEN YOUR A BLAZE TREE, WE WORK! YOU PUT THOSE CUT IT! NOBODY'S GOT FALSE BLAZES ON TIME TO STOP AND FOR REVENGE AND EXAMINE EVERY TO MAKE DAVE TURN BLAZE! AGAINST ME!



AW, FORGET THAT SISSYPANTS GOVERNMENT GUY AND GET FRIENDLY, RUSTY! BE NICE TO ME AND YOU'LL GET PLENTY OF TIMBER OUT!

I WARNED YOU! LET GD OF ME, YOU STUPID LUNK! I HATE YOU!



I WARNED YOU! DON'T TRY THROWING ME OVER FOR THAT SKINNY SNOOPER!

GET OUT, YOU BEAST! YOU'RE FIRED! DON'T EVER LET ME SEE YOUR UGLY FACE AROUND HERE AGAIN!



And THEN THE TERRIBLE REALIZATION HIT ME --

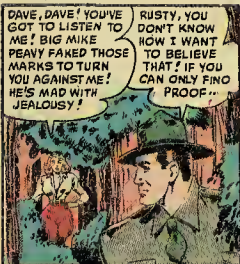
DAVE'S OFF IN BOX CANYON, PROBABLY FINDING MORE FAKE BLAZES! I MUST FIND HIM, TELL HIM I DIDN'T MAKE LOVE TO HIM TO PUT OVER THIS STEAL!



I'LL TAKE THE SHORT CUT TO BOX CANYON! I'LL MAKE DAVE LISTEN TO ME! HE'S JUST HURT AND BITTER NOW! I'LL MAKE BIG MIKE CONFESS!

LOVE CONFESSIONS

I FOUND DAVE JUST WORKING INTO BOX-CANYON AND HIS GRIM FACE TOLD ME HE'D FOUND PLENTY MORE FAKE MARKS!



DAVE, DAVE! YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME! BIG MIKE PEAVY FAKED THOSE MARKS TO TURN YOU AGAINST ME! HE'S MAD WITH JEALOUSY!

RUSTY, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I WANT TO BELIEVE THAT! IF YOU CAN ONLY FIND PROOF...

SUDDENLY A CRACKLING AND THE SMELL OF SMOKE CAUGHT OUR ATTENTION!

FIRE, DAVE! THE WIND'S BLOWING IT RIGHT INTO THE CANYON!

AND IT'S NO ACCIDENT! FIRES DON'T START THEMSELVES ALONG A WHOLE FRONT LIKE THAT! SOMEONE SET THIS TO TRAP ME!



CAN WE MAKE IT, DAVE? COUGH! COUGH! CAN WE GET OUT?

COVER YOUR FACE AND DON'T BREATHE FOR A MINUTE! IF WE CAN RUN THROUGH HERE, WE'RE IN THE CLEAR, RUSTY!



There WAS AN ETERNITY OF SEARING HEAT AND AGONY...AND THEN COOL FRESH AIR...AND SURPRISE!



YOU! YOU SET THIS FIRE TO MURDER US, BOTH!

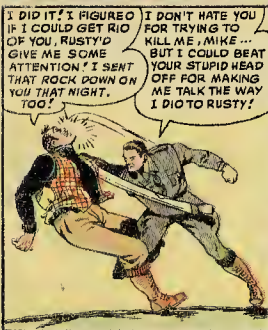
H-NO! I DIDN'T KNOW RUSTY WAS IN THERE, TOO! I THOUGHT SHE WAS BACK AT CAMP! IT WAS YOU I WAS AFTER, SNOOPER!

SLIM DAVE MIGHT BE... BUT HE WAS STEEL AND DYNAMIC IN ACTION! BIG MIKE NEVER HAD A CHANCE...



YOU MURDERING RAT! YOU PUT THOSE FAKE BLAZES ON TO WRECK RUSTY'S OUTFIT AND YOU TRIED TO KILL ME!

EEEEHH! OWOOO! WAIT, MISTER! OUCH! I CONFESS!



I DID IT! I FIGURED IF I COULD GET RID OF YOU, RUSTY'D GIVE ME SOME ATTENTION! I SENT THAT ROCK DOWN ON YOU THAT NIGHT, TOO!

I DON'T HATE YOU FOR TRYING TO KILL ME, MIKE... BUT I COULD BEAT YOUR STUPID HEAD OFF FOR MAKING ME TALK THE WAY I DID TO RUSTY!



CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME, RUSTY? IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO...?

YES, DAVE. THERE IS! KISS ME!



OK DAVE, MY LOVE FOR YOU MAKES ME FEEL AS IF I WERE JUST REBORN!

QARLING! I NEVER KNEW A MAN COULD BE SO HAPPY! IT'S WONDERFUL TO THINK THAT WE'LL GROW OLD TOGETHER AMONG THESE ANCIENT TREES!

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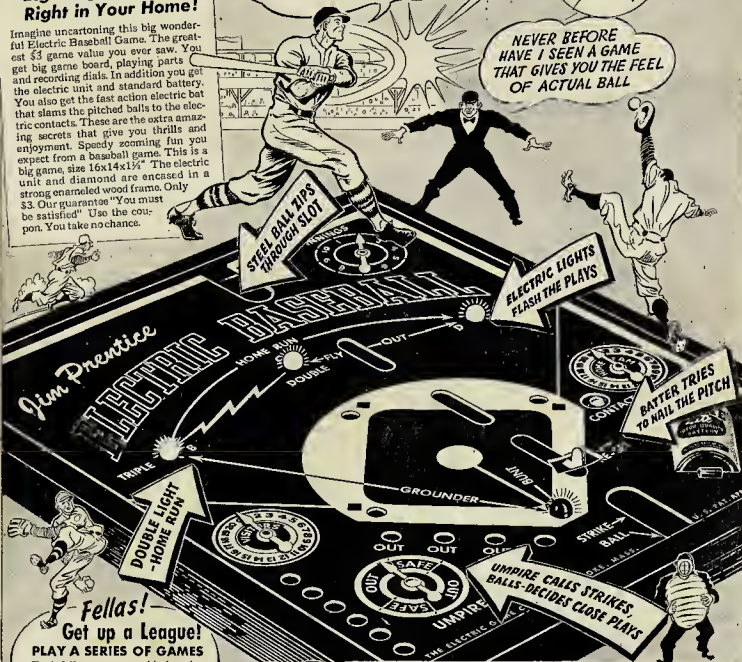
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WELL, THE FIRE'S OUT... NO, BUT THIS THE WAREHOUSE IS SAVED... BUT WE WILL SHOW US WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE... THE REST OUGHT TO BE EASY! STILL DON'T KNOW WHO THE FIREBUG IS...



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